

September 28, 2005

Mr. Lester A. Snow, Director
California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942386
Sacramento, CA 94236

Ms. Celeste Cantu, Executive Director
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Mr. Snow and Ms. Cantu:

PROPOSITION 50 CHAPTER 8 PLANNING GRANT FUNDING

I am writing to express my concern that Los Angeles County is being left behind in the State's efforts to encourage integrated regional water management. The intent of Proposition 50 Chapter 8 is to aid counties, cities and water agencies to develop Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plans to facilitate more efficient and effective water management in regions throughout California. I support the integrated water management planning effort and want to help ensure its success in Los Angeles County.

The County is deeply involved in the integrated water management planning efforts and is one of the key organizations that has brought government, environmental, and other stakeholders together from across the County to develop IRWM Plans. The County, the City of Los Angeles, the West Basin Municipal Water District, the Watershed Conservation Authority, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Authority, and hundreds of other stakeholders have worked very cooperatively to develop four draft IRWM Plans and planning grant applications in accordance with the requirements of Proposition 50 Chapter 8. The four plans effectively cover the entire Los Angeles basin and include projects to help address the water quality and water supply needs of the region. Significant cooperation is occurring not only within, but among the four planning regions.

Given the funding and resources that have been locally dedicated to this effort to date, I am troubled that only one of the four applications in Los Angeles County, and only seven applications in all of Southern California, has received a preliminary score high enough to be considered for funding; while 20 Northern California agencies have received such preliminary scores. I am particularly concerned because completion of these plans is a necessary pre-condition for subsequent IRWM implementation funding. This suggests that your agency intends to grant only 25% of all Proposition 50 IRWM monies to Southern California, and less than 4% to Los Angeles County.

This would be a grossly disproportionate result given Los Angeles County's large population and complex water management issues, as well as the strong support given to Prop 50 by Los Angeles County's voters. With over ten million residents it is imperative that our County, representing more than a quarter of the state's entire population, be given maximum consideration for planning grant funds.

I understand a possible revised approach has been suggested which would increase the overall funding for planning grants in this cycle by \$3 million. The additional funds would be given only to Southern California agencies so as to reach an overall 40% Southern California/60% Northern California split. This would allow all four regions in Los Angeles County to receive funding without cutting recommended funds to any other agency. I would be supportive of this approach and ask that you give it your every consideration.

We stand ready to work with you to address these issues. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue for all Californians.

Sincerely,

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Supervisor, Third District

c: Department of Public Works
Mr. Ed Berends